



General Guidelines

Cervical traction has been shown to be effective to decrease symptoms with many different diagnoses. However, there are several instances where cervical traction is not appropriate and/or contraindicated. Generally, treatments should be discontinued if symptoms increase OR if pain or parasthesia is experienced after traction treatment.

Contraindications

To insure safe application, cervical traction should not be used within the following conditions:

- **Unstable spine**
- **Vertebral fractures**
- **Extruded disc fragmentation**
- **Ruptured cervical disc**
- **Spinal cord compression**
- **Acute strain or sprain**
- **Joint hypermobility**
- **Osteoporosis**
- **Malignancy**
- **Pregnancy**
- **Infection**

Setup

- 1. Determine the patient's body weight. Tension should be up to 7% - 10% of body weight.**
- 2. Determine the amount of neck flexion that is necessary and adjust the traction machine accordingly:
Upper cervical region = 10 degrees (slide stand in upper most position)
Middle cervical region = 15 degrees (slide stand in middle position)
Lower cervical region = 20 degrees (slide stand in lower most position)**
- 3. Remove any jewelry (especially earrings), eyeglasses, and anything else in the cervical region that may get in the way or create discomfort for the patient. Loosen the shirt collar or have the patient change into a gown in order to better expose the neck region. (Cervical traction is only effective if applied if the traction unit is in direct contact with the skin of the neck, not over clothing.)**
- 4. Instruct the patient to lay supine on the treatment table with the neck between the neck wedges of the cervical traction device. Adjust the neck wedges appropriately so that they are snug around the patient's neck. If necessary have the patient sit up and adjust the neck wedges and then have the patient lie back down.**
- 5. Use the hand pump to increase pressure to appropriate level. (Please refer to the protocols within this section for guidelines on the tension amount and the treatment time for specific diagnoses.)**